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**THE MARIN COUNTYWIDE PLAN**



**ECONOMIC  
ELEMENT**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of including an Economic Element in the Marin Countywide Plan is to state the intent that land use and capital improvement decisions in the County and the cities during the next decade support and encourage economic vitality throughout the County. The Countywide Plan is intended to provide a framework which the County and the cities will use in balancing economic and environmental issues when making land decisions in the 1990s and beyond.

Recognizing Marin's residents' increasing demands for a high quality living environment and the decreasing sources of revenues to provide that quality, in August of 1992 the Board of Supervisors established the Marin Economic Commission. The task of the Commission is to recommend policies and implementing programs which relate to the local economy for the Countywide Plan.

### A. A BRIEF HISTORY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTYWIDE PLAN

#### 1. The 1973 Plan

The original Marin Countywide Plan, adopted in 1973 during the "boom years," had no policies specifically addressing economic development of the County. The focus of the 1973 Plan was on establishing areas for urban growth and for natural environment preservation within the County. The 1973 Plan called for a balance of housing, transportation, economic development and resource protection for the years 1970 through 1990.

#### 2. The 1982 Plan and the 1985 Economic Element

During the update of the Plan which was adopted in 1982, the community began to focus on the need for economic policies. In particular, there was recognition of the growing disparity between the kinds of and pay for jobs being created by commercial growth in the County and the type and cost of housing being approved countywide. There was also community concern about the interrelationship of jobs, housing and transportation. An eight member Economic Advisory Committee was created by the Board of Supervisors "to recommend policies to meet the future economic needs of the County."

In 1984 and 1985, under the auspices of the Economic Advisory Committee, an Economic Element for the Countywide Plan was prepared and adopted in 1985. The Economic Element included data on population and economic activity, evaluated relevant local and regional trends and summarized economic growth issues. The Element concluded with eight "Policies" and four "Objectives" to promote well balanced economic development, shown in Table E-1.



Of the four objectives, the first consisted of nine information gathering and analysis tasks to be performed by the County Community Development Agency. The second, third, and fourth Objectives were tasks that required coordination between the eleven cities and the county and were designated to be the responsibility of city and county staffs.

In the seven years following the adoption of the Economic Element, the Community Development Agency had developed land use databases which inventory existing, proposed, and potential commercial and industrial development countywide. The Community Development Agency maintains, semi-annually updates, and publishes an inventory of proposed development in the cities and unincorporated areas. This publication is called PROPDEV.

**TABLE E-1**  
**ECONOMIC POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES**  
**IN THE 1985 ECONOMIC ELEMENT**

The policies of the Economic Element establish a course of action leading toward a better balanced community with jobs and housing available in Marin County for people at all levels of income. These policies address economic activity in the urban corridor. Agriculture is addressed in a separate Agriculture Element of the Countywide Plan.

**A. Policies**

1. Economic development which provides local opportunities for employment, reduces the need for people to commute, broadens property and sales tax bases and has the least adverse environmental impacts in terms of air, noise, and water pollution, must be stimulated and given preference.
2. It is essential that local governments and businesses develop a coordinated countywide approach to economic development.
3. Economic development which provides jobs for Marin County residents at all income levels should be encouraged.
4. Self-employment and home occupations should be encouraged through zoning policies and opportunities to develop appropriate work space, where compatible with the character of the particular residential neighborhood.
5. Employment training and vocational education programs should be supported and tailored to the changing needs of employers.
6. Mixed use development combining housing, employment and retail facilities should be encouraged to reduce the need for commuting and automobile use.
7. The mix of housing size and price in new developments should meet the needs of workers employed in Marin County. Housing should be located near jobs where feasible.
8. A coordinated approach should be used to solve countywide transportation problems in the urban corridor which may impair growth and development of business.



**TABLE E-1 (Continued)**

**B. OBJECTIVES**

In order to carry out the policies of the Economic Element, appropriate implementation measures need to be taken.

1. The County should take a coordinating role in maintaining and providing information about economic development for local governmental agencies and the private sector. The following activities should be undertaken:
  - a. An inventory and monitoring of commercially and industrially zoned land and an estimate of its potential for employment of Marin County residents. The inventory should include documentation of environmentally sensitive lands, such as bay wetlands.
  - b. A list of specific businesses and industries likely to provide jobs for present Marin County residents and strategies for attracting them to locate in Marin County. The strategies might include concurrent approval processing, infrastructure financing techniques, or support of worker amenities such as child-care centers.
  - c. An analysis of projected demand for major office and retail uses.
  - d. A file of current information on existing and pending development for use by government, business groups and potential developments. This inventory should also identify key economic activities which may be forced to relocate unless measures are taken to retain them.
  - e. An analysis of the potential for redevelopment of marginally developed land and an inventory of sites.
  - f. An analysis of countywide telecommunications needs for government and private industry and research on the possibility of increasing the use of telecommunications in Marin County. This analysis should also identify the potential impacts of such development, and recommend measures to reduce adverse impacts.
  - g. Information about financing techniques to facilitate the location of appropriate businesses with a focus on financing transportation, housing and necessary public improvements.
  - h. A survey to identify the labor force requirements and job training needs of Marin employers.
  - i. A report on the revenue bases of communities within Marin County.
2. The eleven cities and the county should identify sites suitable for mixed-use development and do conceptual plans or establish development standards for these sites.
3. The eleven cities and the county should consider developing coordinated local revenue sources (e.g. sales tax override, gasoline tax) for highway improvements ranked countywide in order of need as part of the financial planning strategy for improvements to Highway 101.
4. The eleven cities and the county should coordinate job training programs such as the JTPA to match the workforce and training needs of Marin employees.



### 3. The 1993 Plan and the Economic Commission.

From 1987 through 1993, a second update of the Countywide Plan has been prepared. As part of that process, much of the data on population and jobs in the County was updated to figures available in 1987 in the Community Development Element Technical Report #4: The Marin County Economy. Throughout 1992 and 1993, many workshops and hearings on the Draft 1993 Plan update were held by the County Planning Commission and many comments were received and incorporated into the Plan. Some of these comments stated the need for considerations in the 1993 Plan of the economic outlook for the next two decades.

At the urging of the Planning Commission and community groups in August, 1992, the Board of Supervisors established the Economic Development Commission, with representatives from a broad spectrum of community interests: the chambers of commerce, the environmental groups, the Marin Builders' Exchange, the Marin Council, the Marin Association of Realtors, affordable housing groups, the cities of Marin, labor organizations, and the Marin Property Owners Association. The task of the Commission is to recommend Plan policies and implementing programs which relate to the local economy. Appointments to the nine member Commission were made in December, 1992 and the Commission began meeting in February, 1993.

### 4. Preliminary Economic Element in 1993 Plan To Be Supplemented in 1994 Following Economic Commission Review..

The purpose of including an Economic Element in the Marin Countywide Plan is to state Plan goals, objectives and policies which support and encourage economic vitality throughout the County.

The appointment of the Economic Commission did not take place until the 1993 Draft Countywide Plan process was already in its late stages. Because of this timing, the Economic Commission has recommended that the 1993 Plan include a preliminary Economic Element which will be supplemented in 1994 following the Commission's further review and analysis of recommended policies and implementing programs. This supplementing of the Plan is similar to the approach taken in the 1982 Plan update which was followed by the adoption of the Economic Element in 1985. The Economic Commission has determined that this process will allow the 1993 Plan to be adopted in a timely fashion and allow the Economic Commission the time required to complete its task as assigned by the Board of Supervisors.

## II. **PRELIMINARY ECONOMIC ELEMENT**

An Economic Element is an optional, but not a mandatory general plan element for local governments in California. In 1985, the Marin Countywide Plan was amended by adoption of an Economic Element. The community recognized that the interrelationship of jobs, housing, transportation and the Marin local economy must be analyzed in order to



meet the future economic needs of the County. The policies and objectives of the 1985 Economic Element were the result of that analysis.

The Economic Commission has the task of continuing this analysis, updating it and recommending updated policies, objectives, and implementing programs to enable the goal of sustainable economic vitality in the County to be achieved in the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century. Through its community participation process and its research the Commission's update of the Economic Element will take into account the community's priorities of economic goals, the realistic economic environment faced by private business, the revenue projections for local governments following the budget actions of the 1993 State Legislature. It will consider realistic projections of development potential of the County and the cities and the effects of the fulfillment of that potential on the County's economic future.



### III. OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

The following objectives and policies are the guide for the Economic Commission's task and are an interim statement for economic considerations in the County's decisions until a Final Economic Element recommendation is made by the Economic Commission. The goal of the Commission is to make that recommendation no later than the fall of 1994. The objective, policies and programs are the same as Objective CD-3 and Policies and Programs CD-3.1 through 3.6 in the Community Development Element.

**Objective E-1. Economic Development.** To provide a sustainable economy which results in balanced communities, where residents have opportunities for employment, housing, shopping, services, and recreation. A sustainable regional economy is an important component of a high quality of life for community residents.

The County should encourage economic development in those specific product and service areas, businesses and industries which match the county and regional economy, job base, and employment pictures. This includes encouragement for existing businesses to locate, relocate, or expand in the county. It is essential that local governments and businesses develop a coordinated countywide approach to economic development.

**Policy E-1.1**      **Establishment of an Economic Commission.** The County, with the cooperation of private industry and the cities, should establish an Economic Commission. The purpose of this commission is to make recommendations to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for facilitation of economic development consistent with Countywide Plan policies. The Economic Commission shall:

- (1) Identify and recommend to the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors and to city planning commissions and city councils parcels for expansion or relocation within the county for existing businesses which require commercial, office, and industrial land use designations;
- (2) Coordinate the gathering and dissemination of information, including economic data available from private industry, chambers of commerce, city governments, and other sources;
- (3) Maintain and provide information about development projects in the cities and the county;
- (4) Identify suitable mixed use sites per Program CD-2.5a;
- (5) Update Community Development Element Technical Report #4: The Marin County Economy to include 1990 census data, U.S.



Department of Labor projections on future jobs and expected revenues from revised state and federal budgets;

- (6) Study the fiscal and economic effects of Countywide Plan policies on the local economy and make recommendations to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors that reflects a balance between economic vitality and environmental protection;
- (7) Recommend programs to the County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors that will implement Policies E-1.2, E-1.3, E-1.4, and E-1.5, including strategies for coordinating and expediting permit processing.
- (8) Advocate streamlining the government permitting process at the local and state levels.

**Policy E-1.2**      **Types of Economic Development.** Encourage development opportunities for businesses that provide local employment, reduce the need for county residents to commute, broaden property and sales tax bases, and have the least environmental impacts in terms of air and water quality, noise, wildlife, scenic resources, traffic, and neighborhood character. These industries should include advanced technology, science, communications, education, information, entertainment, international trade, and other industries of the future.

Program E-1.2a      Achieving Economic Development. The Economic Commission should prepare programs to implement Policy E-1.2.

**Policy E-1.3**      **Diversity of Employment Opportunities.** A diversity of employment opportunities should be available in Marin County to provide jobs for residents of all income levels. Diversification will cushion the county's economy against a slump in any one sector and against seasonal fluctuations.

Program E-1.3a      Achieving Employment Diversity. The Economic Commission should prepare programs to implement Policy E-1.3.

Program E-1.3b      Employment Training. Implementation of Policy E-1.3 should include employment training and vocational education to address the changing needs of employers and the community, with focus on training and job placement necessary for the type of business and industry flourishing in the county.

**Policy E-1.4**      **Retaining and Attracting Businesses.** Businesses and industries that meet the needs of Marin residents should be attracted and retained.



These needs include jobs at income levels which enable the rental or purchase of housing in the county and services which provide support for Marin residents, such as child care.

Program E-1.4a Achieving Business Retention and Attraction. The Economic Commission should develop programs to implement Policy E-1.4.

**Policy E-1.5** **Location of Employment Opportunities.** Employment should be encouraged to locate in areas with high transit accessibility, public services, housing to meet employee needs, and complementary retail and commercial uses, consistent with Policies CD-2.2 and CD-2.4.

Program E-1.5a Achieving Suitable Employment Location. The Economic Commission should develop programs to implement Policy E-1.5.

**Policy E-1.6** **Telecommuting and Satellite Work Centers.** Encourage employers, including public agencies, to offer telecommuting as a work alternative. Permit corporate satellite work centers near housing concentrations to allow residents who are employees of out-of-county businesses to reduce their commutes.

Program E-1.6a Project Review. During the development review process, telecommuting should be encouraged in proposed commercial office projects and incentives for telecommuting should be explored by the County Community Development Agency and the Economic Commission.

Program E-1.6b Satellite Work Centers. The Marin County Planning Commission should determine appropriate zoning districts for location of satellite work centers. The Commission should review the Marin County zoning ordinance to identify sections of the code that could be amended to accommodate satellite work centers. The Economic Commission should encourage cities to establish zoning districts where satellite work centers could be accommodated.







